

OPINION RESEARCH FINDINGS

To: Mayor Mike McGinn
From: Bill Broadhead, Partner
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To test the feasibility of a ballot measure to fund seawall replacement, 1,001 likely voters were surveyed between January 22 and 24. The margin of error was ± 3.02 percent.

Topline summary of primary research question

This May, voters will decide a property tax measure to fund replacement and seismic improvements to the downtown seawall, built by city engineers in 1934.

The measure authorizes property taxes of up to two hundred forty one million over thirty years, at approximately twelve cents per thousand dollars of assessed valuation.

If the election were today, would you vote yes to approve, or no to reject this excess levy?

70%	Yes
19%	No
11%	Undecided

Validation

A 2010 bond measure would also require voter turnout of 86,629 for validation. There should be very little concern of meeting this threshold in a winter, spring, or fall election. In fact, Seattle turnout has exceeded this threshold in 11 of the last 12 citywide elections dating to 2006.

The single election where turnout was slightly short of the validation threshold was the August 2007 Primary (at 84,038). Other than the exceptional turnout witnessed in this past primary, August elections have resulted in considerably lower participation than previous September primaries, while substantially underperforming winter and spring special elections.

Poor summer turnout is slightly mitigated by King County's adoption of full vote-by-mail balloting, but significant risk remains of failing to meet validation requirement with an August election.

Impact on future tax measures

In addition to the seawall measure ballot test, two other potential tax measure were tested. Both a potential transit measure and renewal of the Families and Education Levy performed at very high levels. The battery of measures tested, which typically evokes some degree of taxpayer fatigue, belies the strong support of Seattle voters for investment in these areas.